



KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2024

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW



Dear Residents

Since writing to you in April, much has happened that is potentially positive for Knightsbridge but not without challenges for residents. Such is the scale of the threat to residential amenity that the Association has had to work closely with residents' committees at 10 Lancelot Place and 199 Knightsbridge whose detailed work forms the core of the community's response to the 1 Knightsbridge Green planning application. The proposal is one of the largest to hit the area in recent memory.

A planning application for the redevelopment of the Park Tower Hotel has also been preoccupying the Association's Planning & Conservation committee. Between these two schemes, access to light, excessive massing, overbearing height, and substantial increases in footfall remain

key issues for each scheme to resolve. The Association objected to both applications while noting that the status quo was not satisfactory either. See pages 3 and 13.

Together with completed redevelopments at 55-93 Knightsbridge, and the Knightsbridge Estate's K1 site and the Knightsbridge Partnership's yet-to-be-implemented Place Management plans for Brompton Road, these projects will define the public realm in Knightsbridge for decades to come. The prospects are exciting, but residents' legitimate concerns must be addressed first.

Collaborative working between the Association, the Forum and the Partnership is proving to be a more fruitful way of engaging with The Royal Parks and TfL on issues like the potential reopening of South Carriage Drive (see page 13) to motor traffic and regulating traffic flows around the

junction at Scotch House corner. The KA is pleased with the way these collaborations are working.

The King's Speech at the State Opening of Parliament offers a ray of hope that *'Ministers will get Britain building, including through planning reform...'*. The lack of progress at 31-32 Rutland Gate provides a depressing example of how planning regulations are not working. Consent for redevelopment was granted in 2013. Very little has happened in the interim. The properties have not been redeveloped and unused scaffolding has disfigured a Grade II listed terrace for the past four years. Extrapolate this across all London Boroughs – let alone the nation – and the impact on growth and productivity must be material. See page 5 for further details.

Uncertainty prevails over the opening date of Nammos's restaurant (below) in Montpelier Street.



The classic gambit is to 'keep your opponent guessing'. The announcement on 24 June that brand Nammos had secured, for its second restaurant project, the Mayfair site that was once home to Il Borro Tuscan, achieved just that. Late arrival of interior fittings at the Montpelier site is said to be the cause of delay. While the date of opening remains unpredictable, the lack of communication with residents is, regrettably, entirely predictable.

The Pedicabs (London) Act 2024 passed into law in April 2024. It took ten years to conclude and would not have happened without the tireless efforts of our former MP, Nickie Aiken and residents. The KA was in the forefront of efforts to legislate for the registration and regulation of pedicabs and it now falls to residents to make sure that the pedicab industry does not crowd out the interests of those who promoted this Bill from the outset - see further commentary on page 4.

The Piccadilly Line opened as the Great Northern, Piccadilly & Brompton Railway on 15 December

1906. The line is about to be given a major facelift with new train sets as part, we are told, of a £2.9bn investment to modernise the line. There will be a number of line closures the longest of which we notified you about separately and is scheduled to run from 17 August to 1 September. Others may follow. If you believe that city metros are a good barometer of the state of a nation, then fulfilment of this project is not only good for Knightsbridge but also for the image of a country that hosts millions of visitors every year.

Another technological change is also on its way. Between now and 2027, delayed from 2025 following concerns from vulnerable people, most telephone providers will be moving their customers from copper-based landlines to internet-based services using digital technology. BT and the other telecoms firms are still working out the definition of a 'vulnerable customer' and we hope to be able to report further in the Annual Report.

Fly tipping remains a real scourge. The Veolia e-bikes are a great addition to the rubbish collection fleet picking up stray material on days between scheduled collection times. But there are limits to what even they can achieve given the number of visitors, and their behaviour, in our neighbourhood. In major thoroughfares where hotels, department stores and restaurants are present, one way for the public realm to achieve the standard of cleanliness befitting a great international centre is for owners to take responsibility for random rubbish collection in areas immediately adjacent to their premises. Some already do: others might wish to follow. For residential properties, freeholders need to be made legally responsible for the behaviour of their tenants.

On behalf of the Association, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our three new Members of Parliament: Rachel Blake MP, Cities of London & Westminster; Joe Powell MP, Kensington & Bayswater; Ben Coleman MP, Chelsea & Fulham; and to James Small-Edwards our new London Assembly member for West Central. We look forward to meeting them all before too long.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Baroness Gardner of Parkes on 14 April 2024 at the age of ninety-six. Trixie Gardner was a long-standing member of the KA and stalwart supporter of our activities. Her obituary appears on page 16.

I wish you all a relaxing and refreshing summer break and look forward to seeing you at local events in the Autumn.

Melville Haggard *Chairman*

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

Carol Seymour-Newton

With the completion of the Knightsbridge Estate's upgrading of the eastern part of their estate and The Peninsula and the Emory hotels having finally opened their doors – peace prevails. But not for long.

Two major developments will be taking place over the next few years – also mentioned above. Both currently have planning applications with the Councils – 1 Knightsbridge Green with Westminster and the Park Tower Hotel with Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC).

Harrods also has plans for the future which include a rooftop pavilion and an exciting project to open up the basement to ground floor, where the watch counters currently hold sway, to create a two storey Arcade, similar to Burlington. They are also engaged with The Knightsbridge Estate and RBKC in finalising a scheme to improve the pedestrianised stretch of Hans Crescent – more on both in the 2024 Annual Report.

I KNIGHTSBRIDGE GREEN



Consultation on the major planning application, foreshadowed in the Spring Newsletter, opened in July, and there were no significant changes from the plans we had been shown at the meetings with owners, Berkeley Estate Asset Management, earlier in the year. A number of meetings were held with the main interested parties, kindly hosted by the

management of 199 Knightsbridge, in order to gauge local reaction.

Although appreciating the need for redevelopment of the late 1950s building, the Association, in its comments to WCC, raised a number of substantial objections to the proposals.

These included the increase in height and bulk, which would impact on the amenity of adjacent residential buildings; the intensification of footfall and traffic to Raphael Street if the main office entrance were to be moved there from Knightsbridge Green; the loss of daylight/sunlight to residential buildings; the necessity for further proposals to manage traffic in Raphael Street/Lancelot Place

We pressed for the main office entrance to revert to Knightsbridge Green and for Post Office facilities to be relocated locally during construction and returned after construction is completed.

A considerable number of objections to the proposals have been received by the Council and the ball is now in their court. Following the Council's officers' reports we hope there may be a revised application.

A possible scenario, depending on progress through the planning system, is that they could be on site in the first quarter of 2026 and it would then take roughly 3-5 years to completion.

THE PARK TOWER HOTEL

The planning application presaged in the Spring Newsletter duly landed with RBKC in June. Our comments made then still hold good. The proposals at ground level all round the hotel bring significant improvements to the streetscape. This is particularly so on the Knightsbridge frontage and in William Street. There will also be changes to the overall fenestration and all the current regulations on carbon emissions will be met.

The various antenna and other protrusions will disappear from the rooftop.

The stumbling block from the Association's point of view is the proposed increase in the number

of storeys. A previous approval allows extra height but this is set back producing a more elegant finish to the tower, and in our view is preferred.

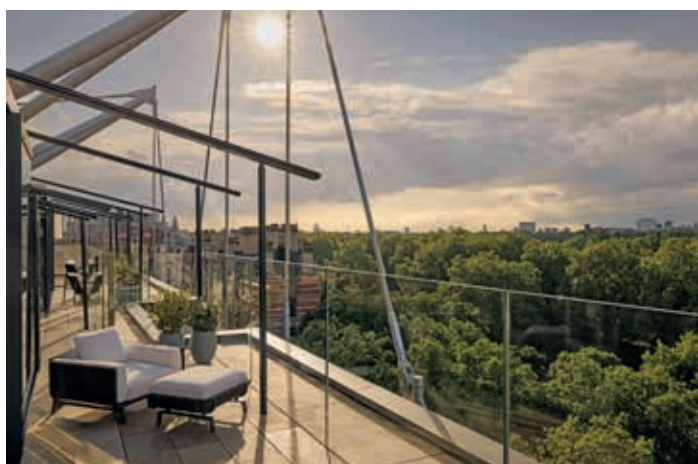


However, the extra height permitted already contravened RBKC's tall buildings policy. When added to the proposed additional storeys, the overall height will increase by a third, thereby completely towering over the four surrounding conservation areas.

We hope there will be a rethink about the proposed height and a return to a more elegant design of the top floors.

If planning permission is granted work is anticipated to begin by the end of the year with completion in mid 2027 and opening in 2028.

THE EMORY HOTEL



View from the Penthouse

Remarkable for its 'sails' structures soaring above the treetops, another new hotel for Knightsbridge, designed by the late Richard Rogers and Ivan Harbour of RXHP architects, The Emory opened its doors in July. Nestling alongside The Berkeley it is also operated by The Maybourne Group. Access is through a discrete private cobbled entrance in Old Barrack Yard. The spectacular rooftop on the tenth floor, with 360-degree view of the capital's skyline,

features two stunning glass pavilions with roofs which can retract in the heat of summer. The hotel is an all-suite hotel.

HARRODS

Congratulations to Harrods as 2024 marks an important milestone in its history: 175 years since their founder, grocer and tea merchant Charles Henry Harrod opened his first store on Brompton Road. 'From little acorns mighty oak trees grow'!

Rooftop Pavilion

Planning approval has been granted to install an events pavilion on the 8th floor roof. This is intended to provide space for brands to showcase and launch products and host guests who will be able to enjoy panoramic views of the London skyline. Harrods tells us events will be by invitation only, limited to 100 guests, and will be managed by an inhouse events team.

It is a temporary structure with permission for events to take place for up to five years and will be constructed from lightweight materials.

It has been shaped to draw attention to the views whilst being located away from the building's edge to minimise impact on the building's key elevations.

Construction is expected to start in the Autumn with the pavilion opening in Spring 2025.

The Association was shown the plans earlier in the year and was happy that at that height and well within the roof space, it should not adversely impact neighbouring residential buildings.

We have a further meeting with Harrods in September when we will learn more about the Arcade mentioned above and will report on this in the 2024 Annual Report.

RUTLAND GATE.

Nos. 31–32 Twelve years on!

Sympathy is due to the residents of Rutland Gate who for years have had to put up with scaffolding – and all that entails for neighbours – at these two houses on the east side. Sufficient work was carried out before the planning permission expired for it to 'go live'. Scandalously, once the permission is live there is no cut-off date, no date by which the works have to be completed.

A flurry of excitement occurred in June when WCC's enforcement were given the go ahead to serve notice to remove the offending structures



31–32 Rutland Gate

as they had been a blight for so long, with no further work taking place and the licence having run out. At the time of writing, the scaffolding remains in place.

Planning permission was given way back in 2013 for various works – including the inevitable swimming pools – to be undertaken. The buildings for many years previously had been occupied by Malaysian Airlines. Since then the Association has been badgering the Council to do what it could to improve matters. Enforcement, being constrained by the law, moves at snail's pace. Once the scaffolding has been removed, the Council will continue to monitor the site to ensure the buildings are structurally safe.

The property market being what it is, in currently uncertain times there seems no encouragement for the owners either to sell on or to complete the development.

Nos. 2 – 8:

Another sorry saga. Until 1980 only one of the original Victorian houses remained alongside the 1930s building occupied by the German consulate. When the house became available all four were purchased and permission was given for redevelopment. Built as one, it contained four ultra luxury flats, each with its own swimming pool. In the 90s major alterations took place, converting it into a single grandiose mansion.

Since then it has led a rather chequered life. Having been owned at one time by former Lebanon Prime Minister, Rafic Hariri, who was assassinated in an explosion in Beirut in 2005, it then passed into the ownership of a member of the Saudi royal family. On his death in 2011 and following the sale of all the luxurious contents in 2015, the house remained empty. In January 2020 it was bought by a wealthy Chinese property billionaire for a reputed £210m and in 2021 planning permission was granted for partial knock down and rebuild, to include a three storey high ballroom and deepen the two-storey basement to allow for a larger swimming pool, a health spa and further underground carparking.

The billionaire's finances were apparently hit by the bursting of the Chinese property bubble and the house is once again on the market.

Recently details of a 'Code of Construction' were approved and a small amount of work took place at roof level, which will presumably keep the current permission 'live'.

A further planning application for amendments to the existing permission was submitted to the Council in March, but subsequently withdrawn.

As with empty properties generally, 2–8 is becoming dilapidated and unkempt. And homeless individuals have been taking up residence on the doorstep. Gently moved on by the Council they continue to return.



Homeless shelter outside Nos. 2–8

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

URBAN NATURE PROJECT

©THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON



THE MUSEUM GETS A FACELIFT

The impressive home to the Museum was designed by Alfred Waterhouse and built at the end of the nineteenth century to house the British Museum's growing natural history collections. Its first director, Professor Richard Owen, called it a 'cathedral to nature'. Which indeed it is! Terracotta was the material chosen for the entire main façade and interiors as it was cheaper and quicker than using stone and was less affected by the polluted air of Victorian London.

The gardens re-opened to the public with great acclaim in July. The renovation of the five acres wrapping around the building into an accessible, free-to-visit biologically diverse green space in the heart of London is part of its Urban Nature Project.

Since the Museum first opened its doors in 1881, the gardens have lived many lives. From a place to bury whale carcasses and excavate their bones years later to add to the Museum's collections, to tennis courts and a Dig for Victory garden during the Second World War. Over time, they evolved into two distinct outdoor spaces – the vast lawn on the east and the Wildlife Garden on the west.

However, this is the first time in its 140-year history that the gardens have been completely transformed. Through two new outdoor galleries – complete with two new resident dinosaurs! – visitors will explore the incredible story of Earth, stretching back more than 2.7 billion years, and learn about the wildlife found on our doorsteps today.

As well as somewhere visitors can rest, picnic and learn more about the incredible diversity of life on Earth, this spectacular new space will be one of the most intensively studied urban nature sites of its kind in the world. Through cutting edge science and innovations it will be a hub where Museum scientists and volunteers alike can develop best practices to support urban nature recovery.



More than 140 years later the building and its decorations are in need of some care and attention. The building is over 200 metres long and 60 metres high at its pinnacles. Now for the first time the façade, the cast-iron windows and the conduits that channel rainwater from the roof will be fully conserved.

Some of our more longstanding members may remember the revealed beauty of the façade when its first full clean took place almost 50 years ago. Unfortunately, the acid solution then used left permanent streaks. The approach today will be a much gentler method using steam to remove dirt and pollution.

The project is expected to take 14 months. The free-standing, rolling scaffolding is not fixed onto the structure and passers-by may notice that it is concealed by a life-size print of the building – see above.

NEWS FROM THE ROYAL PARKS

Dame Mary Archer (right) has been appointed to succeed Loyd Grossman as chairman of The Royal Parks charity.

They are still analysing the results of the consultation on the future of South Carriage Drive. The Association had plenty to say on that!

The Diana Memorial playground in Kensington Gardens will undergo refurbishment during the winter months of 2025/6.

Two unauthorised events occurred on the Parade Ground in April which were contained by the Parks Police.

The four Major General Inspections put on annually by the Household Cavalry also took place on the Old Football Pitches in April.

The Association was somewhat alarmed by the prospect of the Champions League 'Fan Zone' being held on the Parade Ground in June, but it seemed to pass without causing too many problems.

Following the BST Summer Concerts the Parade Ground will be re-seeded, and should recover in time for Winter Wonderland after which it will again be re-turfed. There were some reports of increased noise reaching residential areas.



PUMPKIN BY YAYOI KUSAMA

The Royal Parks worked with the Serpentine Gallery to secure the placement of a delightful sculpture by the Japanese contemporary artist Yayoi Kusama. It is the artist's largest ever pumpkin to date, and will remain in Kensington Gardens until late October.



Pumpkin, 2024
Courtesy Ota Fine Arts,
Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner.

SOUTH KEN ZEN+

Over the Summer, the Exhibition Road Cultural Group – Discover South Kensington – conducted a small stakeholder engagement exercise to understand the threat that climate change poses to the South Kensington area, including from heatwaves, drought, storms and flooding.

Working with renowned landscape consultants, Allies & Morrison, the team used an online survey, workshops, walking tours, and a stand at the Great Exhibition Road Festival to reach around 20,000 residents, workers, students and businesses in the area.

Participants were asked to share views on how the neighbourhood could adapt to climate change whilst also enhancing nature, habitats, and biodiversity.

The feedback received will inform the development of a *Green Infrastructure & Climate Adaptation Audit* for South Kensington. This audit aims to identify project opportunities in the neighbourhood which could help protect people, places and nature from the ravages of climate change.

This initiative is part of a larger collaborative programme of work called South Kensington Zero Emissions Nature Positive (South Ken ZEN+), which aims to ensure the cultural district remains a vibrant place to live, work, study and visit in the face of the changing climate. The program helps member organisations share expertise, reduce carbon emissions, collaborate on supply chain interventions and explore ways to transform the public realm.

If you would like to find out more, please contact southkenzen@discoversouthken.com



The aftermath of the Summer Concerts on the Parade Ground

SUMMER EVENTS

LONDON OPEN GARDENS

8 and 9 June 2024



Hyde Park Square

This popular annual event, started 25 years ago, began with a group of volunteers' passion to open up beautiful private London squares in the west to the general public for a brief moment. It has since grown to embrace gardens across central London including exquisite roof spaces, historic institutions, community allotments and reclaimed and rewilded urban oases. This year there were again over 100 participants. All proceeds from around 40,000 garden visits made by ticketholders during the weekend each year support the London Parks & Gardens year-round work to cherish and protect city green spaces. Profits are shared with the community gardens that take part.



Earls Court Square

GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD

ANNUAL FESTIVAL 2024

15 and 16 June



On 15 and 16 June, Imperial College London and its neighbouring institutions (including the Science Museum and Natural History Museum) once again joined forces to deliver a packed programme of events for the 2024 Great Exhibition Road Festival.

South Kensington was bursting with hundreds of free activities exploring how science and the arts can help people and the planet flourish. A record-breaking number of people registered for this year's Festival, with over 50,000 visitors of all ages flocking to the area to enjoy interactive science exhibits, music and dance performances, creative workshops, and informative talks.

The Great Exhibition Road Festival will be back next summer on 7–8 June 2025. Sign up to the Imperial events emails to get updates about the Festival and other public events (or follow @ExRdFestival on Instagram, Facebook and X for the latest Festival news)

HYDE PARK BST SUMMER CONCERTS

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Kings of Leon, Shania Twain and Andrea Bocelli were amongst the eclectic star-studded performers featuring at the annual concerts in Hyde Park over three weekends from 29 June to 14 July.

Shania Twain “The Queen of Country Pop” was among the star-studded lineup for her BST Hyde Park debut



Winter Wonderland will again take over a great swathe of the Parade Ground for the Christmas period, running from 21st November to 5th January. Closure of this area for mounting the event will commence on 30th October and demounting will run to 17th January. Look out for road closures.



KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA ART WEEK

A free family trail was launched in July as part of Kensington and Chelsea Art Week. Supported by a combination of The Knightsbridge and King's Road Partnerships and the Zoological Society of London, it featured nine splendid bronze sculptures created by Australian artists Gillie and Marc. Roaming through Knightsbridge and the King's Road, it aimed to raise awareness of endangered animal species. If you missed it, here is one of the sculptures.

LICENSING REPORT

Paul Meitner

After a relatively quiet winter and spring the volume of licensing applications has picked up, perhaps driven by the 'Summer of Sport' (Football's Euro Championship, Wimbledon and the Paris Olympics).

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (NHM)

Although the area around the NHM is largely institutional there are residential blocks which would be affected by the proposed terminal hour of 1 am, as well as the increase in noise, crowds and traffic around the new Queen's Gate entrance. That street has limited capacity and the noise from crowds could reverberate across the road. We suggested that the terminal hour be

brought forward to no later than midnight and new conditions added:

- Restrictions on patrons congregating in Queen's Gate after 10 pm.
- Patrons leaving events after 11pm to exit via the main Cromwell Road entrance or the Exhibition Road entrance (i.e. not onto residential Queen's Gate)
- Daily rubbish collection and improvement of the current disposal options along Queen's Gate
- Monitor and enforce parking rules for coaches, cars and delivery vehicles to prevent illegal parking on Queen's Gate and other local streets.

CLAP

12 – 14 Basil Street

This involves an extension by one hour to 12.30 a.m. of late-night refreshments and sale by retail of alcohol (on and off the premises). Also, the opening hours will be extended by an hour and a half to 1.00 am. Our assessment was that this would have a significant impact on residents and so we asked that the application either be rejected completely, or the same hours as are currently in place continue into any new licence.

ZUMA, 5 RAPHAEL STREET



We understand that the current licence is likely to be transferred to a new restaurant operator. While the current operation has generally been well received by the residents, concerns have been expressed concerning early deliveries and rubbish collection, as well as the late night dispersal of patrons into residential streets. We have been in touch with the owner's agents and hope to begin a dialogue that will result in our concerns being addressed.

McDONALD'S

177 BROMPTON ROAD TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICES

As in prior years, this year McDonald's have submitted numerous temporary event notices, mainly at weekends around public holidays. Sadly, we have no right to object – the only parties that can are the Police and Environmental Health. We can still monitor these occasions and ensure that any



*McDonald's in
Brompton Road*

noise or anti-social behaviour is reported to RBKC's Licensing Enforcement team.

And finally...

FISH AND CHIPS

IS COMING TO KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Eatbrit Enterprises Limited have applied for a premises licence at 138 Brompton Road, which will operate under the name of 'Mayfair Chippy Knightsbridge'. Terminal hours are 11.30 pm Monday to Thursday and midnight Friday to Sunday. Opening date yet to be confirmed.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION on THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IN LICENSED PAVEMENT AREAS

Along with other Residents' Associations in London we were invited to give our views on the three options set out for amending the current legislation:

1. Make permanent the temporary regulatory easement of 'off-premises' sales, so that any on-premises sales premises licence would automatically cover them.
2. Amend the Licensing Act 2003 to extend the definition of 'on-premises' sales, so that it included any consumption in a licensed pavement area.
3. Amend the Licensing Act 2003 to permit 'on-premises sales' only licences the right to extend 'off sales' to any area where there is a premises licence in place.

Option 1 was clearly very unattractive, as it would have given permanent status to many temporary applications that had not been subject to due process, likewise Option 3 would have extended the boundaries of 'off sales' licensed activity into the public realm.

We opted for Option 2, which would ensure the proper assessment of all 'off-premises' sales activity and maintain public accountability.

LAW AND ORDER

Frances Blois and Anne Wright

POLICING IN OUR AREA

The Knightsbridge Association is strongly represented on what is the Westminster Area Police Panel – indeed Frances Blois is the Chair of the Panel. At the most recent meeting in July it was reported that there had been a decline in crime over the last quarter involving theft, theft from person, robbery and burglary. Although the Police team were immediately congratulated by those present their response was not what was expected. The crime figures are down because almost certainly possible incidents of crime are not being reported to them.

You will see at the bottom of this page a list of contact numbers and email addresses that should be used should you be a witness to a potential crime or have been the subject of one. Please keep these details on your mobile phone so swift reporting can be made.

SNATCHED PHONES – BEAT THE MUGGERS

Particular unreported crimes are the theft of mobile phones often by masked thugs riding bikes, mopeds and e-scooters. These robberies have soared in our area particularly around the hot spot areas of the tube stations, Hyde Park Corner and quieter residential areas off the Brompton Road. We all need to be more aware of our surroundings and only use our mobile phones when it is safe to do so – otherwise put it away and out of sight.



An open invitation

Deterrence in the form of visible police presence can help reduce the number of muggings but as with any other crime that the police say cannot be solved through law enforcement alone, mobile

muggings also require other answers including, in this case, technological. The Met Commissioner has recently met with some of the larger tech companies to ask them to introduce a 'kill switch' that will disable phones as soon as a theft has been reported.

Whatever you do, choose a strong PIN or passcode and get your phone's IMEI number which can help track the phone down if lost. Try typing in *#06# on the phone keypad. Turn off the message previews too so that the thief will not see any messages about a reset code and you should set up a tracking app so you can see where it is from another device.

SHOP LIFTING aka 'STOCK TAKING'



We have all become horribly aware of the increase in shoplifting in our area with the necessity of greater use of surveillance staff and door security. Generally, the reporting of shoplifting to the police is governed by each shop owners' internal procedures and dependent on the manager of each store to operate the same. The larger chains are better equipped to respond to both one off and organised shop lifting by 'professional' gangs and are doing so by responding to changing tactics by effectively doing the same thing – but in reverse. The use of face recognition cameras as well as standard closed-circuit systems are vital in the tackling of this crime and used together with obvious security devices is having the required effect. The Knightsbridge Association fully supports local retailers in this effort as do our local Police force.

SUPERCARS and ANTISOCIAL DRIVING



Summer in town and in and around Knightsbridge in particular means an increase in illegal street racing, anti-social driving and driver revving giving out excessive volumes of noise – often at night. This needs to be reported as it happens if the police are to respond quickly, which they must do if they are to deal with the likely offence.

In recent weeks supercars have been seized as part of a joint Westminster Council and Police crackdown on anti-social behaviour with the Met's special constabulary and council officials during joint patrols resulting

in numerous arrests. Individual reporting is however necessary if the Police are to better deal with this anti-social behaviour. Despite the introduction of the new rules for the licensing of Pedicabs, which was one of the last pieces of legislation passed by the Conservative government, Transport for London (TfL) has said it needs to launch a consultation on the implementation of the new legislation

The Pedicab legislation gave TfL power to crack down on rogue pedicab drivers by regulating fares and improving safety standards – bringing the industry into line with other forms of transport in the capital and closing a legal loophole that had meant the industry in London was not regulated, exposing some customers – including tourists – to eye-watering fares, dangerous driving and antisocial behaviour on the city's streets. However, it is for TfL to decide when, where and how many pedicabs can operate to ensure they do not cause a hazard to pedestrians and other motorists. Drivers in breach of this legislation could face having their license revoked, their pedicab confiscated or a fine of up to £2,500.



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

- Call 101 if you require non-emergency police assistance.
- Call 999 if you require emergency police assistance.
- Contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you wish to supply anonymous information.

If you need to contact a ward team for Westminster or Knightsbridge and Belgravia wards the details of the various teams are available on the MPS website:
www.met.police.uk

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett

I KNIGHTSBRIDGE GREEN

The Transport and Environment Committee has commented formally on the major planning application for 1 Knightsbridge Green (1KG). Key transport issues include demolition and construction, operations, servicing and travel. On demolition and construction (including dust and air quality impacts) we have said that all work should be undertaken solely within the development site with access only from Brompton Road (as The Knightsbridge Estate opposite largely managed) and Knightsbridge Green. We do not want to see a pit lane blocking such a congested part of Brompton Road unless it is essential and restricted to a short period. No demolition or construction vehicles should enter Raphael Street. Over the medium or longer term, there may be merit in reversing the direction of traffic flow in Raphael Street to eliminate rat-running. The project would be completed in 2029 or later.

SLOANE STREET FUTURE

The Sloane Street Future project is making steady progress. It should greatly improve Sloane Street provided that the traffic flows are well managed and the pavement space is not commercialised e.g. as has happened disastrously beside Harrods and at the south end of the Exhibition Road. At the recent bi-monthly community liaison group (CLG) meeting we were told that the retail sections of Sloane Street are due to be completed before the Christmas lights are 'turned on' on Saturday 16 November 2024. Works are expected to be completed on the central section of the street by the end of December. Road resurfacing works are planned to take place overnight in three sections during January 2025. Sloane Street is due to re-open to two-way traffic by the end of January 2025. We should all bear in mind, after two years of northbound closure of Sloane Street, that there are likely to be some congestion or other traffic problems for several weeks after re-opening as drivers and Transport for London get used to the new set up. Generally, we expect to see more, not less traffic coming into our area as road capacity and resilience returns to pre-closure levels.

Please register to attend the next planned CLG meeting on 6pm-7pm on Tuesday 1 October 2024 if you would like an update: sloanestreetfuture.co.uk/.

Any problems or suggestions about the project can be sent to Helen McConnell (07917 518 529) or Cate Green (07443 077 444) email: sloane.street@fmconway.co.uk.

SOUTH CARRIAGE DRIVE

The KA, Knightsbridge Partnership Business Improvement District (BID) and Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum had a positive meeting with senior representatives of the Royal Parks on 14 June 2024. They confirmed that no decision had been taken following the Spring 2024 consultation about the possible permanent closure of South Carriage Drive (SCD) pending possible further work. Reassuringly, they have decided to trial a solution to the current shambles behind Aspley House where cyclists from South Carriage Drive, Park Lane, Hyde Park Corner and The Broad Walk 'collide'. This is needed whatever the final decision on permanent closure. If the new cycling arrangements, proposed by the BID's traffic consultants, work out it may be possible to re-open South Carriage Drive to eastbound only traffic (through the south side of the Queen Elizabeth Gates). This might be a workable compromise instead of permanent closure. The Royal Parks was very clear however that no final decision has been taken and SCD may still be closed permanently.

e-SCOOTERS AND RENTAL BIKES

Westminster City Council decided on 17 July to approve a traffic order coming into force on 29 July 2024, on an experimental basis, to introduce dockless e-scooters/cycle hire parking places or amend or suspend existing e-scooter / cycle hire parking places at various locations in Knightsbridge. In essence, these would move: the crowded single bay in Montpelier Square to a double bay in front of 15-17 Montpelier Street; the bay at the bottleneck in front of Eresby House to the motorcycle bay beside the existing bay at the



north end of Upper Rutland Gate gardens; and the motorcycle bay to the other side of the road. These changes are warmly welcomed. The KA is grateful to Councillors Hitchcock (Conservative) and Dimoldenberg (Labour) for supporting them. It will be important to assess and send feedback during the six month trial period to tmo.westminster@wsp.com and dockless@westminster.gov.uk. At the time of writing, we were waiting for the changes to be implemented. Our focus will now move to the crowded bay in Ennismore Gardens which we think should be moved from beside the busy corner with Princes Gardens to further north up the east side i.e. under the trees and within sight of Kensington Road. And to the bay at the north end of Exhibition Road where it seems to protrude like a sore thumb into the busy roadway.

STREET LIGHTING

A number of residents have helpfully used FixMyStreet.com to report street lights that are damaged or not working in Montpelier Square, Montpelier Street and Trevor Street. These reports

go straight through to FM Conway, the Council's contractors. On a recent 'walkabout' with them, we pointed to other longstanding problems in Ennismore Gardens. These lights usually get fixed but it can take time because some are listed or need new electrical connections. The months of work required to replace a single light in Montpelier Walk is a good example, as is the temporary solar light on the corner of Montpelier Place and Montpelier Street. Please keep reporting faults, be patient and tell us if nothing is happening.

PICCADILLY UNDERPASS

Carriageway resurfacing and related works are due to be undertaken briefly at Piccadilly Underpass later in the year. They may involve some disruption. Please plan ahead and check your journey before you travel.



Temporary light in Montpelier Street

MISCELLANY

PAVILION ROAD CAR PARK

Plans were approved in 2019 for the redevelopment of this car park to a series of mixed uses including a boutique hotel, health club, restaurant and retail. Earlier this year an application to allow an increase in the number of bedrooms and other variations was submitted to RBKC and has yet to be decided.





KNIGHTSBRIDGE TUBE – STEP-FREE ACCESS

In 2013 plans were mooted to create step-free access by opening up the old Tube lift shafts in Hooper's Court, between Brompton Road and Basil Street, (see left), and installing brand new lifts and other up to date equipment.

This was enabled by the Knightsbridge Estate's project for upgrading the eastern triangle of their estate, bound by Sloane Street, Brompton Road and Basil Street. Completion was projected in 2021, then 2022, then 2023, then 2024 and now possibly some time in 2025. TfL are not committing themselves.

Meanwhile at South Kensington, where plans were approved for 'around the station' redevelopment in December 2023 which would provide some step-free access, RBKC have withdrawn their contribution to the funding.

SERPENTINE BRIDGE

Earlier in the year the Grade II listed bridge was damaged when a car crashed into it causing significant damage to the parapet and structure. Due to the extent of the damage and the bridge's architectural heritage, the repairs required are both delicate and substantial. Repairs will be completed in summer 2025.



KNIGHTSBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP REPORT

The Knightsbridge Partnership convened stakeholders, including RBKC, Westminster City Council, TfL, businesses, property owners and amenity and resident groups* to work together to develop a Public Realm and Place Strategy to address the challenges in Knightsbridge. In September, the strategy which highlights a flagship scheme for Knightsbridge and Brompton Road and 17 neighbourhood projects will launch at the London Real Estate Forum.

Following the launch of the strategy, the Partnership will restart the co-design approach to work with stakeholders including the Knightsbridge Association to take the concept designs to RIBA stage 3 and to secure the

necessary investment to deliver the strategy over the next 15 years.

Whilst the longer term strategy continues to be developed, the Knightsbridge Partnership continues to deliver initiatives that support the business and residential community today. In September, the Partnership will launch a new plain clothed street team to strengthen the impact of the existing uniformed street presence and in July, launched its first sustainability programme for the business community to improve their environmental credentials.

**KA chairman Melville Haggard participates as an observer on the Board, representing Residents' interests.*

Baroness Gardner of Parkes 1927 – 2024

Baroness Gardner died in April aged ninety six. She was a long-standing resident of Knightsbridge and an active and valued member of the Knightsbridge Association, as was her late husband Kevin Gardner who chaired the Association's Traffic Committee for several years. They lived for some time in Lancelot Place in a house built and designed for them in the 70s. Lady Gardner (Trixie) was the first Australian woman peer, and had a long and distinguished parliamentary career as a member of the House of Lords and Deputy Speaker and was renowned for her common sense, determination and humour. She is much missed by family, friends and colleagues.



EVENTS

TOUR OF HYDE PARK BARRACKS



A 'behind the scenes' tour of the Barracks has been arranged for 16 October and was fully booked within minutes of the invitation being

sent to members. The tour is to be followed by coffee when Lt Col Matthew Woodward has kindly agreed to join the group and talk about the Barracks and its history. These tours always prove to be immensely popular and we will definitely have to arrange another one soon.

63rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 63rd AGM will be held on Monday 20th January 2025. We are grateful to the management of the Mandarin Oriental for again making the elegant Ballroom available to us. The papers will be sent to members in early November. Please keep the date in your diary.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Noise: WCC **020 7641 2000**

RBKC **020 7361 3002**

The Parks: **0300 061 2222**

USEFUL CONTACTS

WCC Knightsbridge/Belgravia
Ward Councillors

Cllr. Tony Devenish tdevenish@westminster.gov.uk

Cllr. Rachael Robathan rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk

Cllr. Elizabeth Hitchcock ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk

GLA Member for West London Cllr. James Small-Edwards james.small-edwards@london.gov.uk

REPORT A FAULT

To report faults re lighting, pavements, potholes, blocked gulleys etc. go to:

www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it

www.rbkc.gov.uk/report-it

RBKC Brompton and Hans Town
Ward Councillors

Cllr. Mary Weale Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk

Cllr. Walaa Idris Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk

Cllr. Sof McVeigh Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk

All information correct at the time of going to press. Please check websites